

No. 4.

DECEMBER 18th.

1916.



ALCESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL RECORD.

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EDITORIAL.

Examinations have occupied the minds of many of us during the past few days, and the results in most subjects are known by now. Of those same results one may say, to quote from a familiar book, "non nullis certe grata, aliis ingrata." In many cases disappointment has come through lack of care rather than lack of knowledge, and I cannot too strongly urge upon all the importance in these days of exact knowledge and of painstaking carefulness in all we do. The boys and girls of to-day are the men and women of to-morrow, and it behoves everyone in these times to make the most of opportunities. Especially is this the case in education, for school days soon slip away, and they never return. Therefore, to one and all I would say: "Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways."

During the past term not a few of you have helped the school by undertaking duties which formerly were done for you, and the Editor in his other character of Headmaster thanks you most heartily for all that you have done.

Christmas time is with us once more, and in the ordinary course of things the Editor would send to all readers of the Record the customary greetings. He does indeed desire that the New Year may be a happy one for you all, but in these

days a merry Christmas seems hardly in keeping with the terrible events of the time. And how can we be merry when so many family circles must be incomplete? But there is a pleasure of a more enduring kind that that which arises from the ordinary merry doings of Christmas time—the pleasure, I mean, of helping others.

If over any homes there hang clouds of depression caused by business worry, or by the wearing anxiety for the safety of dear ones far away, what better aim could you have than by your cheerful faces and willing helpful hands to lighten such a cloud, and be for it the silver lining?

"OUR YOUNG MEN ARE SEEING VISIONS."

"Our young men are seeing visions; our old men are dreaming dreams, and on mountain tops for ever rising sun of wisdom gleams."

A hundred years ago our young men saw visions, and our old men dreamt dreams. Then, as now, a great war, greater than any before in history, was being waged; a war in which half the world fought; a war which had more than kingdoms—more than empires at stake. Then, as now, the heaviest burden fell on the shoulders

of England; then, as now, she was the one country whose shores were inviolate, whose people had felt neither the bitterness of bondage nor the shame of invasion. Then, as to-day, she bent all her power, all her energy, to her task.

But the war to-day is different in many respects from that waged a hundred years ago. Then though the objects were much the same, yet the interests were widely different. Then, only a comparatively small portion of the people of England were engaged in the war; to-day there is hardly a home in all the Empire which has not contributed its share towards the common effort and no home which has not some interest in the war. The methods of fighting have changed. Armies are counted in millions now where before they were counted in thousands, and the cost of war has increased accordingly. Until this war only professional soldiers and sailors fought—now it is the manhood of the Empire, all its young men who fight. Now they realise why and with what object they are fighting, then they fought more or less because they were told.

For to them early in the war came the vision of a small country oppressed and down-trodden, of a great militant nation, treading under its heel the liberties of Europe; and of England, their England, bowing down before this tyrant, losing her pride of race, her freedom and her honour. They saw her as she would be in the future did she hesitate now. They beheld her invaded, the prey of a conqueror. They foresaw their children robbed of their heritage; and they arose in answer to a call—a call to their blood, a call to their love of liberty, and answering that call they came in their hundreds of thousands, many of them not understanding at first why they came, but only obeying an impulse stronger than anything else. From every shire, from every town and village they came. The call spread to the farthest corners of the Empire—and not in vain. To death, to suffering untold, to hardship and privation; to imprisonment; to agony of mind and body they came and flinched not.

“And our old men dreamt dreams.” Yes, dreams of youth and strength departed, dreams of the days when they, too, would have offered and fought and endured; dreams mixed with envy and admiration. They dreamt of the past, the young men of the future.

And still our young men see visions—visions this time of a world the better for their pain;

visions of greater liberty, of greater justice; visions of a world made anew, of long years of Peace, of happiness at home. If they had not visions how could they fight on? They endure what man has never endured before; they pass through ordeals for which neither their bodies nor their minds have been trained.

Many have died with the vision still before their eyes to comfort them in death. They have gained their reward; they came for an ideal, fought for it, and died for it. “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*” So they thought. Many have lost their limbs, their sight and their health. But by far the greater number fight on.

Nor is self-sacrifice confined to the trenches. We are familiar with it at home. The men are fighting and the women are working. In factories, on the land—everywhere where there is work to be done they may be found. There is no fuss and no lamenting, outwardly everything is the same as ever. One meets no dismal faces as one walks down the streets; whatever there is of worry and anxiety and sorrow, little is shown.

Good has arisen out of evil. Wisdom, born of suffering and self-sacrifice, is among us. Everywhere one sees a breaking-down of class barriers—a gradual yet nevertheless a sure process. Common sympathies, common effort, and a common cause have done more in the last two years than anything else. All classes have the same feelings—this war has made us realise that. It has done more, it has made us realise our responsibilities. We no longer walk about content with ourselves, caring only for our own pleasure. Empire means more to us than a mere word, or a collection of colonies. We have forgotten ourselves, our small quarrels and petty affairs in the all-engrossing problem of how to win this war. We have no time to grumble, no time for regrets. Some who never thought before have been made to think; some who never felt have been made to feel. They have suffered but they will be better for that suffering. “On mountain tops for ever rising sun of wisdom gleams.” There will be shadows on the lives of many which not even time can remove. But over all will hang “the glory of a dream.”

“Blow, bugles, blow! They bought us for
our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love and
Pain.

Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,

And paid his subjects with a royal wage.
And nobleness walks in our ways again,
And we have come into our heritage."

D.T.

IN THE TRAIN: A TRUE INCIDENT.

They were seated in the train, each one taking an occasional peep at his neighbour over the top of his newspaper. Yet in the cold English fashion no one dared to make a remark or enter into a conversation. "Dear, dear, I wonder how much longer this train is going to remain here," an elderly matron was saying to her daughter, when the carriage door was banged open. In an instant all was confusion. "Come on, Bill, get in 'ere," shouted a voice; "Good-bye, good luck, don't forget to give 'em one for me," and two young men stumbled into the carriage. The younger of the two, a pale-faced man with red hair, was very excited, and was addressing all his remarks to three khaki clad figures standing at the door. "Don't forget to give 'em one, an' think o' Bill 'ere, good luck, good ———," but he was interrupted by the guard, who, slamming the door, yelled, "Stand back there," and before he of the red hair could speak further, the train had started.

The Matron frowned, and drew closer to her daughter, but the little lady in the corner moved, and said, "There's room here." The red-haired one was not to be daunted, however, "Ere Bill, yer medal, show yer medal my lad." Bill, blushing unbuttoned his coat, and his friend said, "Look, the Military Medal; only two of them 'ad it. Lord French presented it to 'im this morning; see, my pal's medal."

In an instant the atmosphere of the carriage changed, the matron leaned forward eagerly, and the little lady in the corner said, "How splendid but you're not soldiers, are you?" "Why, of course, what else; we've been in the 'orspital, and now we're going for open-air treatment at B———" "Oh, do tell us how you got the medal," said a girl in a brown hat. "Well, it was like this. Me and ————" "Well it I was———" they both began, and so half of the carriage listened to Bill, and the other half to the red-haired one.

"Ye see it wuz like this," he said. "Me an' 'im 'ave always been pals, and we was in the same regiment. We got out ter France, and were there in a pretty 'ot battle, shells whizzin' round us, an' I don't know wot. Well, 'is kid,

'is younger brother, was in our regiment, and Bill's mother 'ad told 'im to keep an eye on 'im. In the middle of everything a bombing party went out, an' Bill 'e was with them. 'E soon came back with a body in 'is arms, which was maimed terribly. 'E put it down and went on firing. Suddenly the word passed down our line as it were 'is kid that he 'ad carried in. Well, I never saw a chap take on so; he jumped out o' the trenches, and shouted, "Come on, lads, we'll give it 'em. 'E didn't know not 'e was doin.'" The news fair drove 'im mad. The officer shouted, "Come back Jones," but 'e took no 'eed and went on.

"Well, I don't remember much more, fur I was wounded, till I found myself in 'orspital an' 'im in the next bed.—'E 'as been gassed and the doctor says 'e's on the way to consumption. But the officer came down on Monday, an' 'e says, "Bless me, Jones, if you don't deserve something for what you did; twelve prisoners and seventeen wounded," and that's why you see 'is medal there.

"But it's 'ard; I'd give anything in the world for what 'e's got, an' what's more, I worked 'as 'ard as 'im, p'raps more, but I wan't noticed, no," and he brushed a tear away, saying, "Look, what a silly chap I am." "Never mind, they're honest tears," put in the little lady in the corner, "they're nothing to be ashamed of, never mind that, and be glad that your friend has it." "Glad, why I'm proud of 'im, proud that 'e is my pal. Think I begrudges it 'im? Why I luvs 'im, luvs 'im, I do, more than if he was me brother."

"Yes, I was gassed in the left lung," and Bill's words floated down to the other end of the carriage, as the red-haired one paused, "and now we are going for open-air treatment. Ah, 'ere's our station; come on, Joe," and he opened the carriage door. "Shall you go back to the front," put in the voice of the corner lady. "'Oo knows? We don't, but I 'ope so, to give 'em a bit back for this," and Joe followed his comrade out into the darkness.

"Good-bye, and the best of luck," said the matron as she held out her hand. "Good-bye" was said on all sides, the whistle went, and the carriage door shut, but the voices of the two friends floated back into the carriage.

"Poor boys," said the little lady. The stern matron blew her nose furiously, and then there was silence.

M.A.

HOAR FROST.

Although winter is so cold and in many ways unpleasant, it has one redeeming feature. This is hoar frost. How lovely the world looks, when on looking out of the windows after tumbling out of bed, one sees a sprinkling of fine white powder over the hard fields. The hand of winter has indeed been busy in the night.

The fir trees look splendid as they loom up, laden with the hoar frost, and their drooping branches look so heavy. For a long way up the road, nothing can be seen but an avenue of white-coated elms, rearing their heads on high as if they did not fear winter or any of his doings, for he could not harm them. The white road stretching away up the hill looks like a huge crawling monster, and the cottage on the summit is dimly silhouetted against the rest of the scene.

It is very, very still. One could almost imagine that there was no life for miles round. But, hark! the boy is calling his sheep to their morning feed, and they all run to him in a long string, eager to have their breakfast. They, too, show signs of the frost, for their backs are white and glittering, while their sides are a greyish colour, as the snow has fallen off as they move. The cows, too, raise their lazy heads, and answer to the call. One by one they scramble to their feet, leaving green patches on the white glistening field, where they have been lying all night. Now the boy has gone to the fowl-pen, and opens the door. The hens rush eagerly to the door—but there they stop. The world has been transformed in the night, and it is strange and dazzling to their eyes. Instead of the dark brown and green of autumn softly melting into each other, it is all a gleaming crystal world, field, tree and hedge alike. But after a moment's pause, the cock steps boldly out into the unknown. Stepping gingerly, he raises his head, flaps his wings, and greets the morning in his usual way.

All the live things seem to wake up now. The birds fly, twittering, in among the branches of the trees, and the robin begins his cheery song while searching for grubs. Sparrows peep from the house-tops, and then sally forth to see if the people of the house are in the bedrooms or kitchen, for the sparrow hopes to get his breakfast not from good old Mother Earth, but from the bits left from the breakfast table. Pigeons fly over the house gazing in wonder at the new-coloured world. Ducks waddle into the pool, or, rather,

on to the pool, and they, too, cannot understand why it is that they cannot swim, and why the pool has suddenly become hard and slippery.

Then the sun appears, bathing the whole of the Eastern sky in red glory. When he comes, Winter retires sulkily until night, for his work will be undone. All the trees which he has touched with hoary hands will soon present a very different appearance, for they will drip and drip until they are their normal colour once more.

P.K.T.

MY EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS.

Faintly in my earliest memories linger blue sunny Indian skies, streets lying white and dusty under the blazing tropic sun, with dark-skinned natives hurrying to and fro—the only human beings who dared to venture out in the pitiless heat of the day. I can dimly remember my early home, vast, spacious, of blocks of white stone, with pillared verandah and lofty staircases, ascending, in my childish fancy, to Olympian heights.

Almost my first distinct memory is of sitting at the head of a long flight of stairs, playing with my doll, "Alice." Suddenly she fell from my grasp, and with a sense of acute horror, I saw her bumping down step after step. Extensive damages resulted, and my mother was called upon to repair and renovate.

Alice was my first doll, and she has outlived generations of her kind. She was presented to me when I was one year old—I have her now. Though bruised and battered, a smile still curves her placid lips and dimples her waxen cheeks—that have somewhat lost their roses in the battles of her fifteen years of life. I shall never part with Alice, for surely her tenacious grip on existence should meet with some reward.

My native ayah used to take me for walks, on the Maidan, and in the streets. Sometimes we met a native with a huge flat basket balanced on his head, containing a kind of small greasy pancake for sale. The ayah would purchase some; I esteemed the sweet, leathery, cakes as a great delicacy, and to me then they were indeed delicious!

Once my ayah took me to visit her home. This proceeding would not have been countenanced by my parents, so it had perforce to be carried out stealthily. We waited till the last

whisk of my mother's frilly skirts had vanished round a distant corner, then scampered off.

The home seemed very dirty and miserable to me. The earthen floor was trodden hard and slippery by bare feet; my ayah's relatives were squatting about on it, in the crouching posture, favoured by Indian natives. I sat in their midst on a high stool, from which I dreaded falling. After some time we departed; I remember that I was very glad to be in the open air again. Our escapade was unknown to my mother until years after.

In my early memories my two brothers do not play an extensive part. This is probably because they were away at school at Darjeeling. When they were at home we used to fly kites from the flat roof of the house.

One very vivid memory is of my brothers beguiling me into demolishing a handful of raw green chillies. The painful scene which ensued is indescribable. However, my frenzied howls soon brought ayah, running, to my rescue. As far as I remember, her remedy consisted in stuffing a large cotton handkerchief into my mouth, thus nearly choking me.

In the hot weather we sometimes went to a bungalow on a wild part of the coast, Balasore. The nearest drinking water was nine miles away, and had to be brought by native coolies. A high, iron-spiked, palisade ran round the bungalow to keep out tigers, for only a short distance away waved the tall reeds and pampas grass of the jungle. We bathed every day in the sea, although whenever a large wave rolled in I was terrified, and dashed away up the shingly beach.

When I was four years old we came home to England, so my Indian remembrances all fall within that period, and, must, perforce, be few. I now have difficulty in drawing the line between what I really remember and what I have been told. I think all the incidents set down here are what I still actually have in my memory. M.F.

EMMA.

Who is there in the school who has not heard of Emma? Emma of the carrot hair, Emma of the long pigtailed, Emma of the knitting needles. Rumour reports that her baptismal name is Gladys—but who could call Emma, Gladys? A Gladys, we imagine, is tall and slim, rather pale perhaps; she certainly has not red hair. No, indeed; Emma is, and always will

be, the name by which we know her. When she first came to school we remember her as a quiet, rather timid little thing, very much in awe of the staff. Lately, however, she has developed to a remarkable degree. Her latest craze is "Votes for Women." She expounds to us, her form-mates, the wrongs of woman and the wickedness of man. She imagines herself a second Mrs. Pankhurst. Upon one occasion she so far forgot herself as to make a fiery speech upon the "down-trodden and unfranchised women, of which she is an emblem," in the presence of an august member of the staff. She has, we think, hardly the appearance of a "down-trodden woman" (her age, be it known, is fourteen), but then appearances are often deceptive. Lately, too, she has been developing upon the athletic side, and she has proved herself quite a capable goalkeeper at hockey. We wish, however, that she would not look quite so worried when the ball comes her end of the field.

Every day in the Fifth Form room she airs her views upon mankind in general, and her schoolmates in particular. But, however much she may talk, she is not a despiser of womanly things, for she has proved herself a most excellent knitter.

In years to come we foresee that she will become an ideal and rather charming maiden aunt. She will live in an old-fashioned little cottage in the country and will spend her days in knitting (already her favourite occupation) and in looking after numerous nieces and nephews, who will be sent to "Aunt Emma" when recovering from infectious diseases. She will certainly wear spectacles and mittens, and will, in all probability, keep several tabby cats. A.P.J.

FAIRY REVELS.

In the Fairyland
Freckled toadstools stand,
On them dance, in raiment bright,
Elves and fairies, swift and light—
Dancing in the silent night,
Beneath the starry sky.

Where no mortal passes,
Slung between the grasses,
Cobweb hammocks lightly swinging—
In them, fairies sweetly singing;
While their blue bells softly ringing
Tell that Day is nigh.

Then a helter-skelter,
 Fairies rush to shelter.
 Lo! in the East a line of gold,
 The coming of King Sun foretold;
 And woe betide the fairy bold
 Who low now doth not lie! M.F.

THE UPPER FOURTH.

(BY A MEMBER.)

In its career the Upper Fourth has passed through three phases. The two first, being decidedly unpleasant, had perhaps better sink into oblivion unmentioned. At present, it has the reputation of "rowdyism." As a member of this maligned form, I may say that we are rowdy from the best of intentions, for usually everybody is trying to reduce someone else to peace and order. Naturally, the process is somewhat disturbing!

One or two members are notorious for their abundance—or superabundance—of animal spirits. Between classes these love to indulge in a little physical recreation. When they suddenly become aware that the whole class is in an uproar their loud and prolonged cries of "Shut up!" "Sit down!" invariably bring in a furious teacher, and, in the teacher's wake, swift retribution. Then—for a time at least—we are subdued.

The rest of the school were rather amused when the "pious hypocrites" of the Lower IV. became the renowned "rowdyites" of the Upper IV. We ourselves are not aware of any great change in our natures, and our enemies asseverate that the turbulence was in us all the time, only concealed by our dissembling cloaks of false virtue!

It is rather a pity that we have one or two would-be vocalists in the form, as their discordant attempts at "Vogelveid!" provoke speedy suppression. This process is decidedly noise-producing, especially when the offenders defiantly persist in their lamentable failures at "dulcet melody."

Other members of the form appear to take a keen interest in seeing to what pitch the average human voice can be strained. Upon the listeners the effect is excruciating. There is certainly no one in the Upper IV. that can be accused of bashfulness or backwardness when it comes to making a noise—not even the industrious and painstaking "good boy" of the form, for his

reedy, high-pitched tones can usually be distinguished among the surrounding Babel.

As a form, we do try to hold together. Some time ago we were told that we must have entirely forgotten the motto of "Play up, and play the Game," the precepts of which were thoroughly instilled into us in the Lower IV. I am sure this is not really the case. Though at times we seem heedless of it, the memory of this motto prevents many an action taking place which is not strictly "playing the game," and we all are grateful for the thorough drilling we received, the effects of which will, I am sure, carry us through with greater chances of success in Life's splendid works.

WHY WARWICKSHIRE IS MY FAVOURITE COUNTY.

What a beautiful county Warwickshire is! We who live in it are apt to take the exquisite scenery as a matter of course, but go for a holiday in some town, return, and then see if the countryside strikes you. Ah! what a relief to see the cool fresh green hedges and fields, after the rows and rows of smoky bricks. Here you can breathe in the space that is around you; while in the town you can fully understand the feelings of a poor caged animal.

Warwickshire! The word conjures up visions of old-world villages, tiny thatched cottages, solitary farmhouses, picturesque old mills, broad fields in which the cattle lazily graze, beautiful woods where pheasants, squirrels and rabbits abide; green hedges intertwined with honeysuckle, waywind and wild roses, flowers everywhere and birds singing.

And in Warwickshire the night is no less beautiful than the day. For the air seems full of mystery, with shrill cry of the bat, and the mournful wail of the owl. Who would dare to say that fairies did not exist, for the air is full of their hushed whispers and suppressed laughter. What a wonderful calm is over everything, and the moon looks down at the moon-daisies nodding their dew-laden heads in slumber and smiles, "And all the air a solemn stillness holds."

Here it was that Shakespeare spent his life, every spot seems to be associated with him; the fields he roamed, the rivers in which he fished, and the woods where he poached. What other county can boast of such a man? Here Scott found his "Kenilworth," George Elliot her

scenes in "Adam Bede," Thomas Hughes his "Tom Brown's Schooldays," and here Matthew Arnold lived. It was here, too, that the Romans pitched their camp, and the footsteps of the early Britons first wore away the grass.

Who could not be happy in Warwickshire? What more could man desire? As if to support my statement a little ragged urchin has just gone trudging along the road singing "Merrily, merrily, shall I live now, under the blossom that hangs on the bough." M.A.

AUTUMN.

Autumn with her fiery tresses,
Flying from the trees,
Comes along the sunlit valley,
Summer quickly flees.

Leaves are turning red and yellow,
Falling from the branches high,
Forming underneath a carpet
Where all dead and still they lie.

J.W.W. (age 10 years).

SOCKS.

Now that it is war time the word "socks" has become very common among us. Soldiers in the trenches are continually writing home for more socks. If you see a person knitting, and ask them what they are making, the answer is generally "Socks." If a person looks worried over their knitting and you ask them what is the matter they generally say, "Oh, it is these wretched socks."

In this school there is always a great deal of argument as to which is the best way of knitting socks. Some geniuses say that the welt should be four inches, while others contradict, and argue until they are speechless, maintaining that it should be five. The number of narrowings is the source of a second argument. Some say you should narrow three times, others five, whilst the careless ones maintain that it is not necessary to narrow at all.

When I started knitting socks I did not know how to do the heel. Consequently, I brought my knitting to school and asked someone to show me. One girl told me to knit so many stitches each side the seam stitch for so many rows, and then turn round and do the same again, I was getting on splendidly until someone came up, and asked me how I was turning the heel. I showed

them, and they immediately declared: "That's not the right way; if you do it like that the soldier will soon have a raw foot. How do you think a poor man is to walk with a seam stitch like that sticking in his foot? Besides, if you do it that way it all doubles up round his ankle and is most uncomfortable to walk in." I was persuaded to start again, and this time the shape was more triangular. It seemed quite satisfactory, and I was getting on quite well until my first instructor returned. She informed me that I was mad, and said it was only a matter of common sense that a man's heel was not the shape of a triangle.

I determined not to start again, nor to ask anyone else their way of knitting, for I was sure to be told a different method.

I used to think that turning the heel of a sock was a mania peculiar to this school, but later found that I was wrong. I went in for an outside examination the other day, and the first question that met my eyes on the first examination paper was "Show two methods of turning the heel of a sock, and point out their advantages." I could not do it because I am not an expert in knitting, but I wished some of the girls in our school could have had that question. M.S.

MY FIRST VISIT TO A V.A.D. HOSPITAL.

During the week-end at half-term I had the opportunity of visiting a V.A.D. Hospital for wounded soldiers. Before the war the hospital had been a school, but now all is changed, and the desks have given place to beds.

I was taken in at the door which had once been the girls' entrance. I was taken along a corridor which led to the central hall. Here were many beds, most of which were occupied. The men were very cheery; some were sitting up in bed, playing draughts or cards, some were reading while others were lying down, too ill to do anything. By the side of each man's bed was a little locker, where he kept all his books, cigarettes, chocolates, etc. I was shown some more wards which had been classrooms. The men had pinned pictures over the blackboards. I was next taken to the operating theatre. There was a sort of table in the middle of it, about as big as a bed, where the patient lies when he has an operation. There was a glass cupboard in the room which contained a number of little instru-

ments. Some of these were like curved needles while others were like knives.

I was taken to the convalescent part, and the men were sitting round long tables, having tea. The nurses were hurrying along with mugs of tea, pots of jam and plates of bread and butter. The food was quite plain, but there was plenty of it. I went into the recreation room. Here were billiard tables, draught boards and a book-case.

I now left the hospital, after having a very interesting time. Seeing those wounded men lying there made me realise more than ever something of what the men at the front are doing for us.

R.J.

VIVE L'HONNEUR. A STORY OF THE WAR.

Mme. Dutroit sat by the huge fireplace, gazing thoughtfully into the glowing embers. In her hand was an opened letter. Once more she smoothed it out, and glanced through its contents.

"Ah!" she murmured, "that will be exactly right. We are to cross to England on the 28th. That gives us one more Christmas in the old home. For the children's sake—it shall be a merry one. We will enjoy it to the full, this last pleasant Christmas.

"On the 27th, we will go to La Havre, and on the 28th— But, how miserable it all will be—strangers, in a strange land. They say the English are good, but how can they equal our own kind-hearted French people? But just now, I will live only in the present. I will think no more of our sad future. And, for the dear children's sake, I will make our Christmas joyful."

The big room was very still. Against the misty windows white flakes of snow were softly falling. The dusk of a drear December day was rapidly closing in, ever and anon came a low, long boom, the only evidence of the distant presence of war.

Somewhere there among bursting shells and curling wreaths of smoke, was Mme. Dutroit's husband. He had gone at his country's call, and left her heart very lonely and sad, and her mind uneasy, about his safety.

Mme. Dutroit shivered, and arose. She walked to a window and tried to peer out, but the veil of drifting snow obscured everything beyond a short distance.

Suddenly she heard the sound of merry young voices, and past the window flitted dim shapes. An instant later the salon door was burst open, and Marie, Jacques and Pierre rushed in, all chattering at the same time in voluble French. They eagerly greeted the stately Mme. Dutroit, and amid exclamations at the weather—the blazing fire—the comfort of indoors after the storm without, they gathered round the fireplace, and besought "Maman" to take the seat of honour in their midst, and tell them fairy legends.

All too quickly time slipped by. So absorbed were they that they did not know that the snowstorm had ceased, and the full moon shone clearly down. They played merry games—all the old games which every French child loves.

They were in the middle of an exciting game of "cache-cache."

No one heeded the stealthy footsteps passing by to the great entrance door, and a low tapping presently startled them. The old servant's shuffling footsteps came along the passage, and soon they heard the rattle of loosened chains. Mme. Dutroit's keen ears caught the tones of a low, deep voice mingling with the high querulous ones of the old woman.

Anna Louise came to the salon door, and summoned her mistress.

In the passage stood a young man, worn and haggard, in bemired khaki. He addressed Mme. Dutroit in broken French. He was an English captain—he had important despatches to carry to headquarters; the Germans were pursuing him. Could Madame suggest to him any place of concealment? Although every moment he had hoped for rescue, he feared the enemy was too close. . . .

The Frenchwoman drew back and considered for a moment. There was no time for hesitation.

"Come, hurry," she breathed. "This way." They hastened along a dark passage and out at a small door leading into the rear courtyard where the snow lay thickly. Across the courtyard to the tiny chapel attached to the old chateau, in at the carved oak door, up the stone aisle, and to a remote corner. Here Mme. Dutroit pulled aside a heavy velvet hanging, and her fingers played over the wall for a second. A sliding door yawned wide. "In quickly" she gasped.

For an instant the young soldier turned.

His hand flew up in a quick salute. "Madame, the lives of many are in your hands!"

He stepped into the dark aperture, and Mme. Dutroit replaced the secret panel.

Then she dashed back with beating heart and trembling hands, into the chateau. Just as she reached the salon, where the three little ones, awed into silence, clung to Anna Louise, there arose a sudden clamour outside the walls; loud, brutal voices hoarsely bawling for admission and heavy blows thundering upon the locked door.

"Go, Anna, you must admit them," said Madame calmly.

The terrified old woman hurried to the quaking door. In the sudden silence the door creaked slowly open, and a tall form strode in. Without noticing old Anna, he brushed past, and burst open the salon door. Mme. Dutroit, who was trying to reassure the frightened children, straightened herself and faced the German steadily. "What do you wish, Monsieur?"

"You are concealing an English spy. We have tracked his steps up to your very door, you cannot deny it. Bring him and give him up to us at once, Madame."

"I have no wish to deny that an English gentleman came here."

"Then, where is he?"

"Ah! monsieur, I regret that I cannot tell you that."

"By Himmel, you shall tell me. Am I, Franz von Kleck, to be thwarted by a woman?"

He turned to his men outside the door. "Search this house; search, and spare not."

Soon the tramp of heavy feet sounded up staircases into every apartment, even outside round the courtyard, and into the chapel. Mme. Dutroit involuntarily started when she heard the sounds of breaking glass, and the reckless throwing down of heavy, priceless old furniture.

Presently the men returned. Their commander's face grew dark as he saw their search had been fruitless. He flung away his lighted cigarette, and trampled the ashes into the beautiful Brussels carpet.

Mme. Dutroit braced herself for the coming ordeal. She had not long to wait.

"Now, madame, speak; where is he?"

"I cannot, will not, tell you."

"You will not?" The German turned round, and gave a low, peremptory order. Several of his band obediently advanced, and tore away

the terrified three little ones from Mme. Dutroit's side. The children were callously gagged and bound with cutting cords. Madame, in dumb horror, watched three of the Germans, pistols in their hands, take their positions. In all her fear Madame had one central thought—whatever it might cost her, she would not betray the English captain. "The lives of many are in your hands." The words still rang in her ears. Never, never, would she—

"Now, madame, I will give you three chances for the first one.

"Will you give up the spy?"

What was that? Faint and far, the sound of galloping horses' hoofs . . . nearer . . . nearer. Would they be in time?

"I will not give him up," she answered, and strained her hearing into the distance. They were coming—coming.

"Again I ask, will you tell me where he is?"

Twice had the question been asked. Still, she answered "No!" and listened eagerly.

"Madame, this is your last chance. If you persist—well. The end one will come first." The man indicated poor, shrinking, little Marie. "I will then give you three chances each for the other two. If you still refuse—well! you have had your opportunities."

If only he would keep talking. The hoof-beats were very near now.

"If I still refuse monsieur, what then?" she forced her white lips to say.

"I shall consider further measures," grimly replied the German. "But I waste time. This is your last-chance. Will you surrender this—"

The sharp report of a service rifle rang out. The officer staggered back and crashed down—and through the open door dashed a company of French infantry. . . .

Mme. Dutroit just had strength enough to get to the further end of the salon and gather the three children in her arms.

She knew no more until, an hour later, she awoke in her own room. Beside her was a tall figure in military costume.

"Pierre!" she cried.

It was indeed her husband, returned after his long absence.

"We have utterly routed them. You need fear nothing—all is clear for your journey to England. And, best of all, our three little ones are safe."

" Even better than that, Pierre ; I have not betrayed my trust. 'The lives of many' are saved ! "

M.F.

" O-U-G-H ! "

" Please, sir," piped the Spelling Class,
" If bakers knead their DOUGH,
Why does a peasant PLOUGH the land ?
That's what we want to know ! "

" And if the thrush to sing his song
Can perch upon a BOUGH ;
Why do folks COUGH who've got a cold ?
It's odd, you must allow."

The Master answered, having searched
The Dictionary THROUGH,

" I'm just as puzzled as yourselves—
But let's pronounce it ' OUGH ! ' "

R.H.

" WHISKERS."

While taking a ramble in the spring I came across a nest in the middle of a blackberry bush. Forcing my way through the bush, I peered into the nest, and saw lying there a little furry ball, almost covered by leaves. I put my hand in to take it out, but I was afraid. My brother eventually did so, and we laid it in a handkerchief. While we were gazing at it, it suddenly scampered off. My brother and I ran after it, and soon caught it again. We took it home, and caused great consternation there, till it was safe in a box. The greatest puzzle was what kind of an animal my new pet was. I inquired from some friends, and they told me that it was a dormouse. He became very tame and pretty, and readily answered to the name of "Whiskers," when I fed him with nuts and milk, which I found he liked. I kept him all through the summer. When winter came I prepared for him a nest made of paper and straw, which, I am sorry to say, he did not need long. One morning I went to attend to him as usual and found that he had escaped, which much grieved me.

H.M.

S O C K S .

Before the war there were two species of socks—children's and men's. Now there is another kind, socks for soldiers. Do not confuse these with those of ordinary men, which are easily purchased in shops. For the all-important kind—you take four steel knitting needles,

six balls of khaki wool and a good temper. You then subtract five from six, and to a mathematical certainty one is left. With this you proceed to wrap the wool round one of the needles and eventually a number of stitches will be found reposing upon that one needle. Then you twist all the needles round, and begin to knit mechanically. You knit speedily, for a quarter of an hour and then you look up to listen to an interesting conversation. But, alas ! when you return to the knitting you will find that a stitch has gone. You hastily undo it all, still in a good humour, and — begin again. When you have dropped a stitch and begun four times at least you hastily run to E———a, the expert, and ask her to put it right.

She will rebuke you for being so pusillanimous, and a click, click, will be heard.

During this time engage her in some interesting discussion, and let her do all the talking. At the end of half an hour a leg will appear. You then entreat her to turn the heel, assuring her the while that she is a wonderful knitter, and when you have finished flattering her, behold—the heel.

You must then take the sock and in the course of a week finish the toe. Feeling very proud of your achievement, you take it triumphantly to E———a, and wait to hear her praise it. But she, while you feel utterly "squashed," brings out a ruler and proceeds to demonstrate. Her verdict is "Not a foot, only ten inches ; it should be eleven." When you say weakly that to your knowledge a foot is twelve inches, she ignores your remark, and says firmly, "It must come out." You profess your ignorance, and beg to be initiated into the art of sock making. At the end of ten minutes E———a dangles the sock, and disgustedly returns it to you. To complete the pair knit the second like the first.

M.A.

A MEMORY.

During my first day at A.G.S. a master entered the classroom.

" Mr. Croaker ! " exclaimed S.W., as an introduction to the newcomer.

During the lesson the master gave me a book, the money for which he told me to give to the headmaster.

On the following day I did so. " Who gave you the book ? " inquired that gentleman.

"Mr. Croaker" I innocently replied. "Mr. Croaker!" exclaimed the headmaster, in amazement. "We have no master of that name my boy. Which master was it?" "The English master," I replied.

"You must mean Mr. S.———," I was informed. Words cannot convey an idea of my feelings at thus being so soon made the victim of a joke.

I may add that afterwards I found the English master anything but a "Croaker." He was a kind, jovial, teacher, doing all he could to help his pupils. I was very sorry when he left.

R.M.

A VISIT TO BREDON HILL.

On the 28th of October the Scouts arranged a cycling excursion to Bredon Hill.

We met at school, and set off about half-past eight, against a very rough wind. When we arrived at the village of Elmley Castle we put up our bicycles, and started up the steeply ascending hill. It took us half an hour of strenuous climbing. When we reached the top we were all "puffing." There was a fir wood, and stone walls instead of hedges. On the summit was a stone watch tower, but to our disappointment it was locked up. We roamed over the hill for some time; then we collected dry sticks and lit a fire, around which we sat on the ground to have dinner. We swallowed more smoke than food! A squabble arose, because a Scout accused his brothers of "pinching" part of his dinner. However, we finally discovered that he had unconsciously eaten it himself!

After dinner we played an exciting game of rounders, and played "Aunt Sally" with an empty bottle. Then we scrambled up and down the hills—it was easier to go up than down, unless we fell.

About half-past two we descended the hill; at the foot one of us found a freshly-killed pigeon, which he promptly stowed away in his haversack. We next explored the village, which takes its name of Elmley Castle from an old castle which used to stand there, and which was destroyed by Cromwell.

The village church was built about 1200 A.D. There is an antique hostel called the "Queen's Head," which dates from the time of Queen Elizabeth.

We had a pleasant homeward ride with the wind behind us, and reached Alcester about half-past four—tired but happy!

R.H.

HOW THE WAR HAS AFFECTED THE SCHOOL.

When the war broke out we had just broken up for the summer holidays. As a school, we were not affected until the end of the next term, when Mr. Gibbons left to join the army. A small entertainment was arranged in his honour.

We were to have had another classroom, but we must wait for that and other additions until after the end of the war.

Last year in the Christmas term Mr. Hall left us to join the colours. Although he was very strict we were very sorry to lose him.

However, some of the effects of the war are pleasant; for, otherwise, we should not have had Mrs. Lloyd and Miss Davies at the A.G.S.

Perhaps one of the losses we feel most is that of Mr. Anckorn, who did all our sweeping and cleaning. Now the scholars have to do these things. Each class sweeps and dusts its own room, two boys sweep the hall, two more mop it, two boys clean the laboratory and Mr. Wells himself attends to the heating arrangements.

The school is kept clean and tidy because we all do our best.

R.H.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

A new department has been introduced into school this term. This is the Milking Department. We have been fortunate in obtaining a cow which is so docile that it spends most of the day grazing in Mr. Wells's study. The advantage of learning how to milk from this animal is that it is tailless and does not kick.

In her work in the Laboratory, M.K.A. has discovered a new liquid. It is called "dilute water."

Can anyone inform us of the whereabouts of a town named "Huddlyfix?" Don't by any chance confuse it with Halifax or Huddersfield.

A "nautical roll" we have found out may mean two things, either the way in which a sailor walks, or, as M.A. understands it, "not to undress in the corridor."

It is possible that an improvement in the girls' department has been noticed this term. After marching round so often with a book on the head we expect a slight result for the better.

A villa is not necessarily a house. In her description of a Roman villa K.W. tells us it is a warrior dressed in armour.

May we ask how C.J.W.B. likes his position as the only male member of the Fifth form?

SCHOOL NOTES.

The school is now without a caretaker, Mr. Ankorn having been called up as a Derby recruit. He is now a signaller in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and is stationed at Sandown in the Isle of Wight.

Mr. Gibbons has moved nearer the firing line, and is still an instructor of machine gunnery.

Mr. Hall is now attached to the 9th Staffordshire Regiment. He has been in hospital for several weeks, suffering from blood-poisoning. He is now better, and when last heard from, was expecting to be sent back to the firing line.

Perks has been in France since Easter.

Payne is a mechanic in the R.F.C.

Cooke has joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and is stationed in the Isle of Wight.

Sheard is a Second-Lieutenant in the Warwickshire Yeomanry, and is stationed at Epping.

Gostling is at present away from the lines at a sniping school. He is now a Corporal. During the July offensive he was slightly wounded in the face.

R. Collins is still on the Training Ship Mercury.

Sisson is exempt from military service until he has passed his examinations.

Hall, Collins and Harbige are with Philip Harris and Co., manufacturing chemists, Birmingham.

Whitehouse is with W. Hall & Co., Studley.

Cowper is teaching at Bidford School.

Marjorie Hall is at Atherstone, teaching a class of forty boys.

M. Alison has passed her matriculation and is studying for her degree.

L. Bennett is an assistant teacher at Alcester Girls' School.

D. Lane is teaching at Binley, Coventry. We congratulate K. Smith, L. Gostling and Cowper on passing the Oxford Senior Local Examination.

FOOTBALL.

The football team has been fairly successful this term in spite of the loss of such players as Hall, Perks and Whitehouse.

At the time of writing this report four matches have been won, and one lost. The wins have been against Evesham G.S. (4 to 2, and 8 to 0), Stratford Commercial School (12 to 0), and the Old Boys (1 to 0).

Redditch Secondary School beat us on our ground by two goals to one.

The result of the Old Boys' match was quite a surprise to us for on paper their team appeared to be very strong, but, as is so often the case with Old Boys' teams, when playing their school, lack of practice told its tale. Our victory on that day was also largely due to the strong defensive play of Cowper, Heard, Bunting and Rimell.

Two team matches have been played, in which the Tomtits proved successful, beating the Brownies by 7 to 1, and the Jackals by 3 to 2.

A match between the Scouts and the Rest resulted in a drawn game.

Criticising the school football as a whole, the noticeable features are the strength of the defence and the weakness of the attack. The forward play is very poor. There is little skill shown, no combination amongst the players, and the shooting which a few years ago was a strong feature of our forward line, is poor.

Some of our matches, even those which were so easily won, have been not much better than a scramble, and a great deal of wild high kicking has